

The Elms input on RFP

Note: I understand the concerns voiced by many on the citizens committee regarding the RFP. The language in the RFP is vague and for those of us working in government in particular, we have experienced the pain of not being specific in a contract and then not being able to get what you actually wanted. Light editing would more clearly accommodate community concerns; right now you have to read too much into what is written. However, if this is the norm for county traffic studies, I take it on good faith that our specific interests will be addressed as needed via the contract or an extension or modification thereof. The following comments are intended to convey the nature of the studies and analysis that should be done.

1a/b – study overall traffic volume and flow in all stretches of Braddock (beltway to Guinea and farther west ideally) at all points through the day, every day

1e and response to Danbury Forest item #36-37 – seems to err a bit on the side of studying these issues as they relate to construction but the most important issue is the long-term impacts post-construction.

1g – including any intersections in that list makes it feel like others may not get due study, suggest leaving as “study all intersections” for travel volume, safety issues, etc. Braddock and Guinea and Braddock and Bradfield both need to be studied for issues already identified in the Elms list of concerns.

1k – study traffic signal operations and impact of signals on Braddock and adjacent roads (Eastbound Braddock at Burke Lake in particular is a problem. If I am heading eastbound during evening rush hour, it is usually faster to turn right on Rolling, then left on Burke Lake and then right back on Braddock. It is extremely frustrating to sit through multiple lights at Burke Lake on eastbound Braddock and watch a smattering of cars turning left in front of me in an inefficient manner because the number of cars turning left just cannot take advantage of the long green light they are given.)

1m – study number of bus and carpool commuters and their origin, how many walk from home, park at edge of community, or drive and park elsewhere along Braddock Rd, ensure neighborhood survey includes questions about current commuting method and likelihood of considering other options

2c – include study of using a center lane, not just far left and far right lane additions.

4a – seems to make sense to study more general transit needs rather than the needs for a transit center at Kings Park. In neighborhood survey, allow citizens to write in what they would do or how they would prefer to commute or travel in the local community—“crowd-sourcing” ideas can lead to new ideas that none of us have thought of before.

4b – don’t just “coordinate” but rather “document” all related county, state, WMATA transportation studies, models, recommendations, plans, etc., that may affect traffic volume on Braddock Rd in the short and long term.

6q – sound was previously identified as the #3 concern from the residents of the Elms, please ensure sound abatement is studied for us.

Response to Danbury Forest item #11 – if medians are grassed, county needs to account for the lack of adequate mowing. The grass in the median between Bradfield and Dunleigh along Braddock Rd is frequently too high to safely see traffic traveling westbound on Braddock from Bradfield.

Danbury Forest item # 19 – it was said during the meeting that studying impacts of changes on the areas beyond the section of Braddock that this project is addressing is not within the scope of the study, but it seems short-sighted to not consider residual impacts beyond the target zone.

Regarding concerns about turning out of Wakefield Chapel, agree with 2 lanes turning left and right when given a green light as there are quite a lot of cars turning westbound onto Braddock during the evening rush. Also agree with concern that the vast majority of roads, in particular Wakefield Chapel, should NOT be allowed to turn right on red, at least during the evening rush hour—it is extremely hazardous with the volume and speed of traffic traveling at that time. Instead, when eastbound braddock gets a left turn signal, provide a green turn arrow once the pedestrians have been given time to get through the intersection. Study optimal traffic flow and safety at these types of intersections.

General speed limit concern – a wider road invites faster speeds but how can we control this if we are trying to make pedestrian friendly conditions and not create more hazards for cars turning onto Braddock from neighborhood streets? Please study how similar communities have handled this.

Regarding air pollution, there was a comment made at the May meeting about if we improve the flow of traffic along Braddock Rd then we will have less air pollution, but there is likely to be an increase in volume and continued idling at busy intersections. We need to see studies on exhaust particulates, how they travel and how far they travel to know if they will present a problem for adjacent homes. (I sent a message last year to the county/state environmental agency responsible for monitoring air pollution in the county specifically about air pollution along Braddock Rd and never received a response.)

Can you post, link to, or at least share with the citizens committee the regional traffic studies, county comprehensive plan, and model (and any other existing guiding documents) that were referenced in the last meeting that guide county transportation projects conceptually?

Supervisor Cook did say that everything was on the table with regard to at grade and alternative grade solutions in the full public meeting, but at the last meeting it sounded like such alternatives were off the table. How does this resolve against trying to be “innovative” at solving what will likely be a difficult solution to develop to address all the many needs and interests at stake here?